

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AQUACULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Rules of Procedure
(In Addition to the House Rules of Order, Revised Statutes, and Constitutional provision)

Adopted March 15, 2012

I. Meetings; Location & Time

Meetings will be held in House Committee Room #3, unless another room is designated by the chairman. The committee meets on Thursdays during legislative sessions unless otherwise prescribed in the schedule adopted by the House on the first day of the session or unless otherwise called by the chairman.

II. Quorum

If no quorum has been obtained within a reasonable period of time after the posted time for the meeting, the committee may adjourn.

III. Committee Decorum

A. All members and witnesses shall conduct themselves in a decorous manner.

B. Upon commencement of the meeting, no person other than legislators or legislative staff may come on the platform where the committee members are seated.

C. Cell phones or other electronic devices with audible tones must be turned off or muted during a committee meeting. Cell phone use is not allowed during committee. Members should step out of the committee room to place or receive a call.

IV. Authorization to Present Instrument

In order for any person, other than another legislator, to present a bill on behalf of the author, that person shall first obtain and deliver to the committee secretary written authorization which shall contain the date, bill number, presenter's name, and the author's signature.

V. Witness, Testimony, and Documentation

A. No person shall be allowed to address the committee without first signing and delivering to the committee secretary a witness card stating his name, agency, organization or other interest represented, and the bill number for which he is appearing.

B. All testimony shall be delivered from the witness table after being recognized by the chairman. Prepared statements, in accordance with House Rule 14.33, may be submitted and filed in the committee records.

C. All handouts for presentation to the committee shall be of sufficient number for distribution to each committee member, two staff members, and the committee secretary.

VI. Amendments

Lengthy or substantive amendments shall be requested or prepared and delivered to the committee staff at least twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting. If not timely submitted, the chairman may refuse the amendments and proceed with the hearing on the instrument or cause the instrument to be voluntarily deferred. Staff is authorized to make purely technical corrections to amendments adopted by the committee, subject to review by the chairman.

VII. Hearing Procedure

Unless otherwise determined by the chairman, instruments on the agenda will be heard under the following procedure:

1. Determination of the necessity of a fiscal note or technical amendments.
2. The author or his designee will be heard on the instrument. Thereafter, committee members may question the author on the legislation.
3. Amendments submitted by the author will be considered before other amendments. Otherwise, amendments will be considered in the order submitted.
4. Proponents of the legislation will be heard followed by questions from committee members.
5. Opponents of the legislation will be heard followed by questions from committee members.
6. Discussion and comments by committee members only.
7. Closing or rebuttal by the author; questions by the committee members at the discretion of the chairman.
8. Motions relative to reporting the instrument.
9. Motions relative to Consent Calendar placement.

VIII. Motions

It is within the discretion of the chairman to entertain motions while testimony is pending.

IX. Voting

During a roll call vote no member may withhold his vote or "pass". Unless he has recused himself, each member shall cast his vote when his name is called and the committee secretary shall repeat the member's vote as either "yea" or "nay".

X. Time Limitations

At the discretion of the chairman or upon majority vote of its members, the committee may adopt time limitations on members or witnesses, or both.

XI. Committee Rules

The Rules of Order of the House govern all questions of committee procedure. In the absence of an applicable House Rule, these Committee Rules shall govern. All other questions shall be decided by the chairman who may consult Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure.